

Boston University College of Arts & Sciences
Department of Philosophy



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Greetings from the Fifth Floor of 745 Commonwealth Avenue! 2015 has been a year in which the Philosophy Department has shared some nice accolades and welcomed some new faces. For the second year in a row, our department improved its ranking in a widely-shared world survey of academic departments, moving to 28th (from 31st in 2014, and earlier 40th) in the Quacquarelli Symonds international rankings of philosophy departments. Ann Cudd, previously Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education at the University of Kansas, was named Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences this summer and simultaneously joined our ranks in the Philosophy Department, bringing her expertise in the areas of social and political philosophy, feminist theory and the philosophy of economics. And Marc Gasser-Wingate from Harvard joined our department as an Assistant Professor of Philosophy; Marc's background is in ancient philosophy, and he'll be teaching a graduate seminar on perception in Plato and Aristotle next fall.

Our faculty this year continued to publish at a high rate, with new books on such diverse topics as philosophy and emerging media; virtue, deliberation and ethics; philosophy of mind and phenomenology; Scottish philosophy in the eighteenth century; and philosophy of narrative. Our highly active cohort of graduate students organized not one but two graduate student conferences this year and several of our current grads can be seen on APA panels in the coming months. At the undergraduate level, while universities in general have engaged in a long conversation about decline in humanities enrollments, the numbers in philosophy have been stable the last few years. We have a new joint major with neuroscience going through the approval process, and a pre-law track is in the planning stages as well. In addition, thanks to a very generous grant from our alum and university overseer Steve Karbank, this summer another impressive group of our undergrads won Karbank Fellowships that allowed them to pursue a range of philosophically-related activities with a "real world" connection, from teaching a philosophy class for homeless shelter residents to helping produce online philosophy videos for the Khan Academy.

For all of the good news, it was also a year in which we mourned the passing of an unusual number of our most venerated colleagues who contributed to the shape of our department's life over the years: Scott Austin, Jaakko Hintikka, Mike Martin and Abner Shimony. As we celebrate the accomplishments of each, we'd especially welcome a word from any of you who have reminiscences you'd like to share.

We hope you will stay in touch and let us know what you are up to. If you live in the Boston area, or happen to be visiting, we invite you to come by your favorite faculty members' offices at 745 Commonwealth Avenue. We'd love to see you and catch up.

Finally, a very kind THANKS to all of you who have helped contribute to keep our programs going. You can be sure that gifts to the current Campaign for Boston University (bu.edu/campaign/) that are marked "Philosophy Department Fund" will continue to support philosophy at BU.

Best philosophical wishes for happiness in the coming year.

Eu prattein/ Be well,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Allen Speight". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

C. Allen Speight
Chair, Department of Philosophy
Boston University